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A

REQUEST

TO THE

JUSTICES

DEVONSHIR HOU
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12. BISHOPSGATE WITHOUT

Not to Make

Convictions Without Hearing the Accusers and the Accused Face to Face in Matters about RELIGION:

According to the Law of God (and the Roman Laws,) in many SCRIPTURES cited both out of the OLD and NEW TESTAMENT.

WE do intreat the **Justices of Peace** not take any Witness or Information from **Informers** against us, to convict us behind our backs, until you hear us together Face to Face: And we do believe that would ease you of a great deal of Trouble in your Courts and Sessions: for in some places the Justices

Juſtices have ſeen many of the Informers have ſworn Falſly againſt us, to have been at a Meeting, when ſome of us the ſame time have been in the Country, and others have not been at a Meeting that day, as in ſeveral places have been proved in open Court; and the Informers have been caſt: ſo that if we and our Accuſers were brought face to face before a Juſtice of Peace before Conviction many of our Cauſes would there end, and never trouble your Courts nor us further. And therefore we intreat you to Read theſe Scriptures following, and you may ſee what the Law of God and the Roman Laws ſay in behalf of our Caſe.

Nicodemus ſaith, (who was a Ruler of the *Jews*) when Chriſt was accuſed by the Officers of the *Jews*, and Chief Prieſts and Phariſees, *Doth our Law judge any Man before it heareth him, and knoweth what he doth?* John 7. 45. 51. And was not the *Jews Law*, the *Law of God?* which *Nicodemus* calls *Our Law.*

And the Lord ſaid to *Moſes*, the Chief Magiſtrate, *Both the Men between whom the Controverſy is, ſhall ſtand before the Judge*, &c. *And the Judge ſhall make diligent ſearch; and if the Witneſs be a falſe Witneſs, and have teſtified falſly againſt his Brother; then ſhall ye do unto the falſe Witneſs, as he thought to have done againſt his Brother*, Deut. 19. 15, 16.

And *Solomon* ſaith, *A Falſe Witneſs ſhall not be unpuniſhed; and he that tells Lies ſhall not eſcape*, Prov. 9. 5, 9. And *Solomon* heard the two Women concerning the dead and the living Child, Face to Face, 1 *Kings* 3. 16.

And again, it is ſaid, *For all manner of Treſpaſſes*, &c. *which another challengeth to be his; the Caſe of both Partys ſhall come before the Judge.* [Mark, Both Partys] Exod. 22. 9. And was not this the Law of God from Mount *Sinai?* that ſaith, *Both Partys ſhall come before the Judge*, &c.

And the Lord ſaid, *The* Jews *were to have one manner of Law, as well for the Stranger, as for one of their own Country*, i. the *Jews*, Lev. 24. 22. So here was no hearing of any Caſe or Treſpaſs to make any Conviction before the Judge, but Face to Face.

And

And when the Officers brought Christ Jesus before *Caiaphas* the High-Priest, where the Scribes and Elders were assembled; *The Chief Priests and Elders, and all the Counsel sought False Witnesses against Jesus, to put him to Death, but found none; at last came two False Witnesses*, and said, *This Fellow said, I am able to destroy the Temple of God, and build it again in three days*, Mat. 26. 59, 60, 61. John 18. 12. Luke 22. 5, 2.

Now here you may see in the High Priests Court, the False Witnesses were brought Face to Face against Jesus before the High Priest.

And after, when they led *Jesus* unto *Pilate* the Governour; the Chief Priests and Scribes stood up, and vehemently accused him; so *Pilate* the *Roman* Governour, heard Christ, and his False Accusers and Witnesses, namely, the Chief Priests and Scribes, Face to Face, before he condemned Christ, *Luke* 23. from 1. to 26.

And the *Roman* Chief Captain of the Castle in *Jerusalem*, when *Paul* was accused of the *Jews*, commanded the Chief Priests which accused *Paul*, and their Counsel to appear before *Paul* and him Face to Face, and set *Paul* before them; so this *Roman* Captain, a Soldier, heard *Paul* and his Accusers Face to Face, in matter of Religion, and not only so, but delivered him out of their envious hands. A brave Act of a *Roman* Souldier, as you may see in *Acts* 22. 30. and 23. 1, 2, 3, 4.

And this Captain sends *Paul* to *Cæsarea* unto *Felix* the Governour, and gives a Relation how he heard *Paul* and his Accusers Face to Face, in matter of Religion: And *Felix* the Governour said to *Paul*, **I will hear thee when thine Accusers are also come.** So we see that *Felix* the Governour, did not hear *Paul* till his Accusers were come Face to Face, *Acts* 23. 35. And after five days, *Ananias* the High Priest descended with the Elders, and with a certain Orator called *Tertullus*, and said to the Governour *Felix*, *We have found this*

Man (namely *Paul*) *a peſtilent Fellow, and a mover of Sedition among all the Jews throughout the world, and a Ringleader of the Sect of the* Nazareens. Here this Governour *Felix* heard *Paul* and the Chief Prieſts, Falſe Accuſers, and Witneſſes againſt him in matters of Religion, Face to Face. But *Paul* cleared himſelf from their Falſe Accuſation before them, *Acts* 24. whole Chap. And when the High Prieſts and Chief of the *Jews*, Informed *Feſtus* againſt *Paul* at *Jeruſalem*, behind his back, when *Paul* was at *Cæſarea* a Priſoner; *Feſtus* did not make a Conviction of it behind *Pauls* back, upon the High Prieſts and Chief of the *Jews* Information. But *Feſtus* anſwered them like a Wiſe Man, and ſaid, *Go down to* Cæſarea, *which among you are able, and accuſe this Man*, to wit, *Paul*. So they went to *Cæſarea*, and laid grievous Complaints againſt *Paul*, which they could not prove.

So here you may ſee, *Feſtus* did hear *Paul* and his Accuſers, in Matters of Religion and Worſhip, Face to Face. And *Feſtus* ſaid to King *Agrippa*; *When I was at* Jeruſalem, *the Chief Prieſts and Elders of the* Jews *informed me againſt* Paul, *and deſired to have Judgment againſt him. To whom I anſwered, 'Tis not the manner of the* Romans *to deliver a Man to die, before he that is* **Accuſed** *have his* **Accuſers** *Face to Face, and have licenſe to* **Anſwer** *for himſelf concerning the Crimes laid againſt him.* So theſe made not Convictions behind back.

And here you may ſee, the Chief Prieſts and Elders of the *Jews*, would have acted contrary to their own Law, the Law of God, (for *Nicodemus* ſaith, *Doth our Law judge a Man before it hears him?*) and contrary to the *Roman* Law, which *doth not judge a Man, before his Accuſers be brought Face to Face, and he to anſwer for himſelf*, as you may ſee *Acts* 25. to the end. And *Feſtus* ſaid to King *Agrippa, That after Examination*, (namely, hearing of both parties Face to Face) *it ſeem'd to him a thing unreaſonable to ſend a Priſoner to* Auguſtus Cæſar, *and not withal to ſignify the Crimes laid againſt him*, Acts 25. 26.

So

So if the Law of God in the Old Teſtament, and the Roman Law, did hear Men Face to Face, concerning matters of Outward things and Religion, (for *Pauls* caſe was a matter of Religion, and in this the *Roman* Captain and the Governours did hear *Paul* and his Accuſers Face to Face, before they made a Conviction, or ſent *Paul* to *Cæſar*) then ſurely *Chriſtians* ſhould not act below the Law of God and the *Roman* Laws, to Convict People behind their backs; ſo that they cannot hear nor ſee their Accuſers Face to Face, till after Conviction,

And likewiſe in *Acts* 6. 7. The Chief Prieſts heard *Steven* and the Falſe Witneſſes againſt him Face to Face, in matters concerning Religion, before they ſtoned him to Death. But in *Acts* 25. 15. The Chief Prieſts and Elders were ſo envious and mad, that they would have had Judgment of *Feſtus* againſt *Paul* behind his back. But *Feſtus* anſwered, *'Tis not the manner of the* Romans, *&c. before he that is accuſed have his Accuſers Face to Face, and licenſe to anſwer for himſelf, concerning the Crimes laid againſt him.*

And therefore we do intreat you to conſider us in theſe things; and let not Convictions be made upon us *behind our backs*, by ſuch as we know not what qualities they be of, nor who they are; but let our Convictions be Face to Face, that we may be heard before we be Convicted, according to the *Law of God*, and the *Romans Law*, which is but reaſon. And it is commonly ſaid, *That the Laws of the Land, are grounded upon the Law of God, Scripture and Reaſon.*

In *Gen.* 3. 9, to 19. you may ſee, after *Adam* and *Eve* had tranſgreſſed the command of God, how the Lord examined them, and heard what they could ſay for themſelves, before he paſſed Sentence on *Adam* and *Eve*, and upon the *Serpent*. And not only ſo, but he ſaid, *The Seed of the Woman ſhall bruiſe the Serpents head.* Chriſt Jeſus, who through Death deſtroyes Death that Man and Woman were brought into, by eating

that

that which God forbad. And likewiſe deſtroyes the Devil, the power of Death: *For as in Adam all dies; even ſo in Chriſt ſhall all be made alive*, 1 Cor. 15. 22.

And in *Gen.* 4 9, to 16. you may ſee, the Lord examined *Cain*, and asked him, *Where is* Abel *thy Brother?* after he had killed him, and the Lord ſaid, *What haſt thou done? The Voice of thy Brothers Blood cryeth unto me from the Ground*; which was a Witneſs againſt *Cain*. And ſo here you may ſee the Lord examined *Cain*, before he made a Conviction upon him, and Condemned him. And do you think the Lord could not have Condemned *Cain*, and have paſſed Sentence upon him, without asking where his Brother *Abel* was; but to give Example?

And in *Gen.* 6. *God looked upon the Earth, and behold it was Corrupted. For all Fleſh had corrupted his way upon the Earth.* And the Lord ſaid, *My Spirit ſhall not always ſtrive with Man*, &c. *I will deſtroy Man, whom I have created, from the face of the Earth.* Here the Lord look't upon them, and ſtrove with them, before he deſtroyed them.

And in *Gen.* 11. when *Nimrod* and his Company were building of *Babel*, the Lord God ſaid, *Behold, the People are one, and they have all one Language, and this they begin to do; and now nothing will be reſtrained from them, which they imagine to do.* And the Lord ſaid, *Go to, let us* **go down**, *and* **There** [Mark, **There**] *confound their Language, that they may not underſtand one anothers Speech.* So the Lord confounded and ſcattered them over all the Face of the Earth. So here you may ſee what the Lord ſaid, *Let us go down, and there confound their Languages.* So he confounded them, and ſcattered them abroad upon the face of all the Earth.

And in *Gen.* 13. 13. *The Men of* Sodom *were Wicked and Sinners before the Lord exceedingly.* And in *Gen.* 18. 20, 21. The Lord ſaid, *Becauſe the cry of the City of* Sodom *is great, and becauſe their Sin is grievous, I will* **go down**, **know**, *and* **ſee**, *whether they have done altogether according to the Cry of it, which is come unto me.*

me. If not, I will know. Now 'tis said in the Margin, *God speaketh after the fashion of Men.* That is, *I will enter into Judgment with good advice.* Here

Here you may see, before the Lord did destroy *Sodom*, he said, *I will go down and see, whether they have done altogether according to the Cry of it, which is come to me. If not, I will know.* And do you think any thing was hid from the Lord, concerning *Sodom* before? But the Lord wou'd manifest his Righteous and Just Proceedings unto the Eyes of Men.

And when *Tamer* was accused as being with Child by Whoredome, *Judah* said, *Bring her forth, and let her be burned. And when she was brought forth, she Convicted* Judah *with his Signet, Bracelet and Staff.* Which made *Judah* confess, *That* Tamar *was more Righteous than he.* So 'tis not good to make Convictions, and give Judgment behind Peoples backs, lest they be made to confess as *Judah* did, *They whom they make Convictions or give their Judgments against behind their backs, are more Righteous then they who judge them.*

But we do think it very hard, that several *Justices of Peace* should make so many Convictions in some places behind our backs, without hearing us and our Accusers and Witnesses Face to Face, who if they did hear us Face to Face, we do believe it would ease the *Sessions* of a great deal of Trouble, and prevent many False Swearers against us, as hath been proved in some Courts; which hath put us to a great deal of Trouble and Charges in the Tryal of our Appeals. And when they have been cast, & proved forsworn, we have had little relief against them as yet: But the *Informers* have gone on still. But if we were but heard before Conviction, it might prevent many *False Oaths*, & the Trouble at your *Sessions*, & a great deal of Charges we are put unto. So we shall leave all those things to your weighty Consideration, and desire that the Lord may give you Wisdom and Understanding to hear and judge of our *Suffering Case.*

From the People called *Quakers*, first Moneth, 1684.

THE END.